Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of

Provision of Directory Listing Information Under the Communications Act of 1934, As Amended	)	CC Docket No. 99-273
The Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements	)	CC Docket No. 92-105
Administration of the North American Numbering Plan	)	CC Docket No. 92-237

COMMENTS OF LOW TECH DESIGNS AND
JAMES M. TENNANT
ON NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

SUMMARY

In many ways, this NPRM to open directory assistance services to retail competition is premature. The Commission has failed to make the tough threshold decisions required to introduce competition into telecommunications services using the heretofore monopoly controlled abbreviated dialing arrangements, which include N11 codes and other abbreviated dialing arrangements, such as the popular "star code" services based on the use of the "*" key on the touchtone keypad. The Commission has confirmed that these star codes, or feature access codes as the ILECs prefer to call them, are in fact telephone numbers less than the normal seven or ten digit numbers. [1] Surprisingly, this NPRM fails to even note the existence of these telephone numbers.

[1] The initial dialing character of "*" in the current North American Numbering Plan is the functional equivalent of dialing the numbers "11" on a keypad or rotary dial. Star codes are strictly controlled by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator and currently consist of the *0x, *1x, *2xx, *3xx, *4x, *5x, *6x, *7x, *8x and *9x series of telephone numbers.

The Commission "conclude[d] that abbreviated dialing could clearly serve many useful purposes" [2] and ordered the North American Numbering Council (NANC), in its Abbreviated Dialing Order, to "explore how rapidly abbreviated dialing arrangements could be deployed and report back to the Commission on this issue". [3]

After five years, the Commission has still not done the work necessary to open up abbreviated dialing arrangements ("ADAs"), and is just now looking at the hard issues necessary to bring competition to just one selected area of telecommunications that can be impacted by ADAs. As a result, the Commission is not sufficiently prepared to make right decisions regarding the use of the Advanced Intelligent Network, 411, 411XX or other ADAs for the competitive purposes contemplated in this NPRM.

For many years, Low Tech Designs, Inc. ("LTD") has urged this Commission to make good on their original intent to allow AIN to become the logical telephony equivalent of an open IBM PC programming platform. To this end, Low Tech Designs, Inc. ("LTD") has filed extensive comments and reply comments in various Commission proceedings concerning methods to combine the use of abbreviated dialing arrangements, or "ADA's" and the Advanced Intelligent Network. [4]

In these previous filings, LTD has urged the Commission to order the competitive use and specific assignment, to CLECs, of abbreviated dialing arrangements, such as 11xx, 112xx and 113xx

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[2] See FIRST REPORT AND ORDER AND FURTHER NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING, In the Matter of the Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements, CC Docket No. 92-105, para. 61, 12 F.C.C. Rcd. 5572 (February 19, 1997) (FCC 97-51).

[3] Id, para. 87.

[4] See LTD's Comments and Reply Comments filed in the Abbreviated Dialing Docket (92-105) and UNE Remand Proceeding (96-98). Also see LTD's *ex parte* filings in the Intelligent Network Docket (91-346).

[5], as dialable telephone numbers, on a nationwide basis, without the requirement of end user pre-subscription. This has now been shown, in other countries, to be the preferred method of introducing retail DA competition.

It is interesting to see that Germany has led the EU in implementing competitive DA services using telephone numbers in the 118xx range, while at the same time eliminating the use of the legacy DA code that provided the incumbent with their unassailable competitive advantage.

LTD has argued that by allowing competitive local exchange carriers ("CLEC's") to be assigned *XX type telephone numbers, in combination with the power of the Advanced Intelligent Network, consumers could be offered innovative telecommunications services not envisioned by ILEC's, or consumer friendly services not considered to be in their own self interest. This certainly applies to the provisioning of competitive DA services.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM 511 DEPLOYMENT

The assignment of the 511 ADA for travel related information accelerated implementation of the technical underpinnings that a competitive DA environment would utilize. Not only would basic DA services be provided, but voice recognition based services would also be made available using the Voice XML standard. Utah implemented 511 in time for the Winter Olympics. Dial 1.866.511.UTAH for live access to this system from outside the state. It is a totally voice driven system and points the way for competitive DA and enhanced DA services of the future. Also, dial 1-800-555-TELL for an excellent overall example from Tell Me Networks of a digital divide

[5] The initial dialing sequence of "11" in the current North American Numbering Plan is the equivalent of dialing the "*" code on a touchtone keypad.

impacting services that could be offered over a simple telephone line. Both these numbers are implemented using Voice XML.

It should be noted that BellSouth is a major player in the 511 infrastructure market. [6] You would think this would make them in favor of expanded use of ADAs in order to increase their revenues in this area of technology.

PREFERED IMPLEMENTATION SCENARIO FOR COMPETITIVE DA SERVICES

1. Wireless and wireline implementation must be provided. Any requirements for ADA activation on wireline carriers must include simultaneous provisioning on wireless carrier networks from a regulatory parity perspective.
2. Eliminate 411 as a valid code after new ADAs are introduced and working. Since incumbent providers would be required to obtain a new ADA to provide their own DA or enhanced DA services, they will have an economic interest in implementing the new ADAs.
3. Allow for the implementation of new ADAs on a per use basis, without requiring pre-subscription to the code. Base new ADAs on unused and expanded "11" or "*" based numbering schemes.
4. Allow new ADA providers to bill on LEC bills, just like 10-10 dial around companies.
5. If necessary, for state regulatory purposes, require all ADA recipients to be LECs.

[6] See http://www.itsa.org. Eight States Select BeVocal for 511. PORTLAND, OREGON. March 26 - Castle Rock Consultants announced today that the BeVocal–BellSouth team has been selected as 511 service provider throughout eight statewide regions. BeVocal of Sunnyvale, California will work with Castle Rock to complete the first generation system being deployed statewide in Minnesota during May. BellSouth will likely take over national system operations when the entire multi-state group comes on line in September 2002.

6. Implement new ADAs using AIN 0.2 triggers for those central offices capable of supporting AIN, if requested by new DA providers. Otherwise, route ADA calls to toll-free numbers.
7. Allow ADA assignees to interconnect their own AIN databases and Intelligent Peripherals in order to control their costs and to offer, without ILEC interference, consumer desired telecom and enhanced service innovations.

Respectfully submitted,

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